



Liberal Democrat
**policies for the
environment**



change that works **for you**
BUILDING A FAIRER BRITAIN



The Liberal Democrats are the only party in British politics that can and will put the environment at the heart of government. We will set – and stick to – ambitious targets for a zero-carbon future. And we'll protect our natural environment, promoting biodiversity and making sure everyone has access to clean air, clean water and open spaces.

This election is not like any other. We now know, from climate scientists, that the next government will be the last that can stop dangerous climate change. That is a huge responsibility for the party that wins this election. But it's an even bigger responsibility for the voters that will choose them on May 6.

So my message to you is this: don't settle for a Labour party that has had thirteen years to deliver on the environment and has failed. Don't settle for a Conservative party that talks the talk on green issues, only to align themselves with climate change deniers in the European Parliament. And don't give your vote to a Green Party that cannot make a difference in Westminster.

Instead, choose the only party that was taking a stand on saving the planet well before it became fashionable. The only party that has led the way on tackling climate change, from championing the 10:10 campaign in our councils, to setting out radical plans in Parliament to cut Britain's carbon emissions. The only party that, now, in the wake of the economic crisis, is setting out a vision for a new, sustainable economy that protects our world rather than sacrifices it.

The Liberal Democrats are the only party in British politics that can and will put the environment at the heart of government. We will set – and stick to – ambitious targets for a zero-carbon future. We'll set an example at home and show leadership abroad too. We'll begin creating our new, green economy on day one by investing in green technologies, energy efficiency and public transport, creating tens of thousands of new jobs that last. And we'll protect our natural environment, promoting biodiversity and making sure everyone has access to clean air, clean water and open spaces.

Britain needs change – change that works for our planet. Here we outline our plan to deliver that change:

- Building green infrastructure and a sustainable economy
- Fair fuel bills and energy efficient homes
- Switching to renewable energy
- Saving lives by cutting air pollution
- Public transport you can rely on
- Taking a global lead on climate change
- Protecting and enhancing our green and pleasant land
- Managing water for everyone
- Zero waste
- Protecting the Global Environment

Vote for the Liberal Democrats, and stop climate change before it is too late.



Nick Clegg
Leader of the Liberal Democrats

building green infrastructure and a sustainable economy with jobs that last

Liberal Democrats want to build an economy that is based on innovation and sustainability. Our aim is to deliver growth that is environmentally sustainable and lasts. We will begin our term in office with a one-year job creation and green economic stimulus package. We have identified £3.1bn of public spending that can be used to create 100,000 jobs. This programme will be a first step towards our target of a zero-carbon Britain by 2050.

We will build up the green economy by investing up to £400 million to refurbish shipyards in the North of England and Scotland so they can manufacture offshore wind turbines and other marine renewable energy equipment. We will invest £140 million in a bus scrappage scheme to help bus companies replace old polluting buses with new, accessible low-carbon ones and create jobs. We will use the substantial purchasing power of government to expand the markets for green products and technologies.

We will set aside extra money for schools which want to improve the energy efficiency of their buildings. They will pay back the loan over time from energy savings, creating a rolling fund to help insulate other public buildings. We will also bring 250,000 empty homes back into use. People who own these homes will get a grant or a cheap loan to renovate them so they can be used: grants if the home is for social housing, loans for private use.

To help the transition to a green economy over the longer-term, we will set up a United Kingdom Infrastructure Bank (UKIB) with government seed funding to attract in private finance – essential to delivering the much-needed expansion of Britain's transport and energy infrastructure when public finances are tight. We will investigate other ways of raising seed capital such as auctioning airport landing slots.

fair fuel bills and energy efficient homes

Energy companies charge you less for your energy the more you use. That's unfair and environmentally crazy. It means a pensioner heating one room pays more per unit than a millionaire heating a mansion. Britain has some of the worst insulated homes in Europe. Tens of thousands of older people die from the cold every year, and a million pensioners can only afford to heat one room. We will change the tariffs used by energy supply companies so the first, essential, energy you use is the cheapest, rewarding those who make the effort to use less.

We will launch an 'Eco Cash-Back' scheme, for one year only, which will give you £400 if you install double glazing, replace an old polluting boiler, or install micro-generation. We will also begin a national programme to insulate many more homes paid for by the savings from lower energy bills, and make sure every new home is fully energy efficient by improving building regulations.

switching to renewable energy

In order to stop being a carbon emitter, Britain must make the switch to renewable energy and clean coal. We will meet the EU 15% renewables target. We will set a target for 40 per cent of UK electricity to come from clean, non-carbon-emitting sources by 2020, rising to 100 per cent by 2050. We will set out

a clear renewables routemap to 2050, covering grid access and investment in electricity networks and we will commit the government to the goals of the 10:10 campaign as a first step.

Liberal Democrats will give people a fair chance to go green, by creating a new 'Eco Cash-Back' scheme and ensuring the feed-in tariff scheme which guarantees prices for micro-generation will benefit community-scale, small business and agricultural projects of under 5MW. We will improve energy efficiency in the commercial and public sectors, by strengthening the CRC Energy Efficiency Scheme, and requiring companies and government departments to report on their energy use and set targets for reducing it. We will set a 30 per cent energy efficiency improvement target for 2020.

We will transform the electricity networks into a dynamic electricity grid that can better connect and integrate new, clean energy technologies particularly through the better use of sub-sea connections, leading to the development of a European Supergrid. We will block any new coal-fired power stations – the most polluting form of power generation – unless they are accompanied by the highest level of carbon capture and storage facilities (CCS). And we will phase in a CCS regime for all industrial emissions by 2020.

We will say no to a new generation of nuclear power stations; nuclear power is a far more expensive way of reducing carbon emissions than promoting energy conservation and renewable energy.

saving lives by cutting air pollution

Thousands of people die every year because of air pollution. It's unfair that they and their families suffer. We will improve your health by cutting pollution. We will cancel plans for a third runway at Heathrow and other airport expansion in the South East, placing an overall cap on the levels of aviation based on 2005 levels. We will move to revenue-neutral road user pricing over the longer term to reduce congestion and city-centre pollution. We will reduce pollution from vehicle exhausts through tighter regulation. We will fully meet European air quality targets by 2012.

Aviation is important for the economy. In some more remote parts of the country, flights are a vital lifeline. But the emissions from rising aviation are a serious problem in the fight against climate change. Liberal Democrats believe we should do all we can to ensure people use alternatives where that makes sense, so we will replace the per-passenger APD with a per-plane duty (PPD), capturing freight movements by air for the first time. We will introduce an additional, higher rate of PPD on domestic flights for which alternative, less polluting travel is readily available.

public transport you can rely on

Britain needs a well-run, efficient transport system. We believe in public transport: it's part of a fair society and the best way to cut carbon emissions from transport without trying to limit people's opportunities to travel. Our UK Infrastructure Bank will invest in public transport like High Speed Rail. We will give councils greater powers to regulate bus services according to community needs so local people get a real say over routes and fares. We will include promotion of safer cycling and pedestrian routes in all local transport plans.

We want to improve the experience for the traveller and cut carbon emissions. We will cut rail fares, changing the rules in contracts with Train Operating Companies so that regulated fares fall behind inflation

by 1 per cent each year, meaning a real-terms cut. We will make Network Rail refund a third of your ticket price if you have to take a rail replacement bus service. We will switch traffic from road to rail by investing in local rail improvements, such as opening closed rail lines and adding extra tracks, paid for by cutting the major roads budget.

taking a global lead on climate change

We will set a target for a zero-carbon Britain that doesn't contribute at all to global warming – making the British economy carbon-neutral overall by 2050 with only 10 per cent offsets, and reducing carbon emissions in the UK by over 40 per cent of 1990 levels with no offsets by 2020 as a step on the way.

Liberal Democrats are committed to securing a legally binding global agreement on limiting the increase in global temperatures to below 1.7 degrees Celsius. We believe that such an agreement must be based on the principles of contraction and convergence (reducing emissions overall, while equalising emissions between the developed and developing worlds).

Strong and credible EU ambition, with effective UK leadership, are essential for achieving a global agreement, so that global greenhouse gas emissions peak no later than 2015. Liberal Democrats will work within Europe and internationally to give renewed urgency to global efforts to combat climate change.

We will press the EU to promote the transition to a low-carbon economy in Europe by: moving unilaterally and immediately to an EU emissions reduction target of 30% by 2020; adopting new long-term targets and policies for clean energy and energy efficiency; and expanding investment in energy technology innovation, within Europe and internationally. We will boost investment in clean energy by reforming the EU emissions trading scheme – auctioning as many allowances as possible, and encouraging other European countries to increase the use of allowance auctions with reserve prices. We will engage with major emitters and deepen diplomatic cooperation between the EU and emerging economy and developing countries who support effective international action on climate change.

At the UN level, we will support the provision of UN Adaptation Funds for developing countries, financed from international emissions markets, such as a cap-and-trade system for international emissions from aviation and shipping.

protecting and enhancing our green and pleasant land

We live in a beautiful country, and we need to protect it better to ensure our children and grandchildren can enjoy it in the future. Liberal Democrats will change the way we protect the environment so everyone has fair access to clean water, clean air, and open spaces. We're the only party that takes seriously the responsibility of protecting our natural inheritance and ensuring access for all.

Liberal Democrats will abolish the Infrastructure Planning Commission and return decision-making, including housing targets, to local people. We will create a third party right of appeal in cases where planning decisions go against locally agreed plans and will stop 'garden grabbing', defining gardens as greenfield sites in planning law so that they cannot so easily be built over. We will equalise VAT on new build and repair, on an overall revenue-neutral basis, to encourage development on brownfield land.



We will introduce landscape-scale policies, with measurable objectives which could include things like the promotion of biodiversity, the restoration and protection of natural features, increased tranquillity, and the encouragement of local food production and the protection. We will create a new designation – similar to Site of Special Scientific Interest status – to protect green areas of particular importance or value to the community. Natural Green Space standards will be incorporated into Local Development Frameworks to ensure accessible green space is provided for everyone.

We will aim to double the UK's woodland cover by 2050, and will introduce a new strategy to bring the UK back on target to halt the loss of habitats and species and as far as possible restore biodiversity by 2020. We will also increase the general right of access to the countryside, along the lines of the model introduced by Liberal Democrats in Scotland.

managing water for everyone

We have real problems managing our scarce water resources. Some people face devastating floods, while others have drought conditions every summer. We will crack down on waste from the water companies and introduce compulsory smart meters in areas of shortage in order to better manage supplies.

Our landscape-scale planning policies will have a specific remit to restore water channels, rivers and wetlands and reduce flood risk by properly utilising the natural capacity of the landscape to retain water, and stop major housing developments in high flood risk areas.

zero waste

Landfill isn't fair for future generations – it destroys our natural landscape and stores up problems with pollution. We will set targets for 'zero waste' so that we never squander resources in this way again and will increase anaerobic digestion technology to generate energy from food and farm waste.

We will require better standards of design and durability from products and reduce excess packaging to improve resource efficiency. We will create a statutory duty on retailers and manufacturers to accept the return of products and packaging from customers once they have come to the end of their useful life; this could include electrical equipment, plastic bags, bottles and furniture, beginning with a pilot on carrier bags and mobile phones.

protecting the global environment

People are living beyond the ability of the planet to support life: more than 60 per cent of the basic ecosystems that support life on Earth are being degraded or used unsustainably. Co-ordinated international action and effective global institutions are necessary to help create a sustainable future and improve the quality of life for all the world's citizens.

Liberal Democrats will work through the EU to make sure that the environment is fully integrated into the objectives of international institutions such as the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and World Trade Organisation. We will protect the world's forests, not only to reduce carbon emissions but also to preserve this crucial reservoir of biodiversity. We will argue for an international target of zero net deforestation by 2020; support a new system of payments to developing countries to enable them to reduce deforestation; and adopt at EU – or, if necessary, at UK – level a new law making it illegal to import or possess timber produced illegally in foreign countries. We will aim to halve the carbon intensity of global food production by 2050. And we will work with other countries to develop an international labelling system for the environmental impact of products, helping consumers choose those with the least impact on resource use and pollution.



Liberal Democrats have championed the devolution of powers to Scotland and Wales, and many decisions made in Westminster now apply to England only. That means that policies in those nations are increasingly different from those in England – reflecting different choices, priorities and circumstances. Our Scottish and Welsh Parties make their own policy on those issues. This document sets out our priorities for a Liberal Democrat Government in Westminster.

Published & promoted by Chris Fox on behalf of the Liberal Democrats, both at 4 Cowley Street, London, SW1P 3NB
www.libdems.org.uk Design and printed by APDA, www.apda-london.com